The Indian Stage

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OUR LOOKOUT.

A THEATRICAL REVOLUTION.

We had recently occasion to refer to the movement inaugurated by the eminent artist, Gordon Craig, in the direction of simplifying stage-scenery. He has been trying to replace elaborate scenic arrangements by single, impressive designs, consistent with the spirit of the plays to be represented. A movement, similar in aims, but different in methods, is that of Max Reinhardt, the creator of Sumurun, whose work forms the subject of an elaborate study in the current number of *T.P.'s Magazine*. During recent years a new class of representations have sprung up under his guidance at the theatres of Berlin—the well-known dramatic classics of the ancient and modern world have been staged, but in a strikingly new form. The unique feature of these performances is thus described by Mr. Huntly Carter. "The acting was extraordinary, but not more so than in other countries; the music, though exceptionally good and appropriate, was not the chief attraction; the scenery was telling, but it did not predominate. The unusual thing was that these things were duly subordinated to the whole, and but were parts of a complete organism.

Each play was a personality. It had its own individual character, its separate atmosphere, its own music, movement and colour. Beyond this each scene and each part of the scene were individualised. Everything, in fact, had its own character strongly emphasised, yet duly proportioned to the whole. Along with characterisation there was visualisation. Everything in a play visualised an idea or object. A great empty throne at once called forth the vision of a king, and moreover the character of that king.

Along with these went an ever-moving variety of expressive colour, following the movement of the acting, the dancing, and the music, and blending harmoniously with them. Of conventional scenery, disconnected from the play, there was none. Everything in the production followed the principles of simplicity and unity."

We have nothing but praise for the ideals which dominate Max Reinhardt, but we are afraid his movement ends in making the theatre much more complex than what it is at present even when weighed down by elaborate stage-scenery. In his anxiety to produce the effect of what he calls *Romantic Realism*, he has availed himself of the aid of several arts and sciences. There is, it is true a commendable oneness about his designs, but they are the products of elaborate effort. There cannot be any objection to the stage-manager's use of complex mechanical devices, but there is always the danger of

the essence of the drama being lost sight of in this hankering after stagic effect.

We should however like to draw the attention of Indian stage managers to the success achieved by him in bringing the spectator and actor as near as possible. He does not rest the merit of his presentation on any distant illusion, but on close contact with the scenes represented on the stage. This movement of 'Intimacy,' as it has been called was suggested by Goethe and in several western theatres the experiment has been tried with varying degrees of success. The audience is seated round a projecting stage and is thus allowed to examine all the materials brought on the stage. It must be trying for an actor to produce a theatrical effect when he is not guarded by any feeling of separation from the audience, but an occasional exercise in this direction must necessarily fit him better for his usual work on the stage. We thus sacrifice the security that accrues from taking refuge behind a professed illusion but there is a powerful impulse imparted to the essence of the actor's art. Can the Indian stage stand the strain of such an experiment?

TWENTY YEARS BEFORE THE FOOTLIGHTS.

III.

BY P. SAMBANDAM, B.A., B.L.

We arrived at the Chenga Bazaar Theatrical Hall precisely at 9 P. M.—only to find, what was practically an empty house. My father had previously told me that they would not begin the performance punctually, and that there was no necessity for us to be there at 9 P.M., precisely. In my youthful folly, I refused to accept his statement, and insisted on being there punctually with the result that I learnt one more lesson. My father had a cool method of teaching me some things. He would tell me that a particular thing would be so and so; if I did not accept his version, he would let me go my way—and feel the consequence!

After our arrival, Govindasamy Rao the actor-stage-manager recognised my father —and I heard him behind the drop curtain order the chief actors to put on new dresses! In those days, the sort of dress which an actor had to put on depended to some extent both on the quality and quantity of the audience!

It was 9-15, 9-30, and still the drop curtain was there in its place without any intention of moving up. A small audience began to gather by twos and threes. I was fretting. My father merely looked at me with a "Did I not say so" look. Then I made my resolution number one, as regards our sabha, that if I should ever have any voice in its management, no performance given by it should be late by a minute even. Looking back upon nearly two hundred performances given by the Sabha, I can say with no small pride and satisfaction, that I have kept that resolution to the letter. The punctuality with which the Sabha performances begin have almost become proverbial. In some cases, as I hope to relate later on, I was indeed put to great straits —but I have always wrung up the drop curtain precisely to the minute.

At last by about 9-40 the drop curtain went up and I sat up all attention. What was my surprise when I found instead of the performance beginning, G. Rao enter in his usual dress of a Tanjore gentleman, with another dressed in an English Clown's dress. After some prayer and a dance, to the querries of the Clown, G. Rao began to relate the

whole of the story that was to be enacted that night! Of course I knew all that before; it was all in their hand-bill. "What need to say all this?" I asked my father. "That is their custom" was his answer. I made my resolution number two, that there should be no such insult to the intelligence of the Sabha audience, nor an infliction upon them. To this day the *nandi*—that which corresponds to the English Overture—is sung inside the stage, five or ten minutes before the time, in all performances given by the Sabha.

I found later on that this Introductory speech served another purpose with these professionals. It gave time to the actors who came late to finish their "make up." So the "Introductory speech" was lengthened or curtailed to suit their convenience. In those days it was the vogue, in some other professional companies, to introduce a Prince and Princess, known as "Mohana King and Mohana Queen" who sang love songs, from a quarter to half of an hour, till all the principal actors had dressed up. I am glad to say that this absurdity has been practically given up everywhere—except in remote mofussil third rate professional theatres.

It was nearly 10 o'clock before the regular performance began. The plot of the drama was an old Indian story which I had read or heard somewhere previously. The acting was not bad; there were one or two good actors notably one K. Rao, who took the part of the heroine. But it was all so crude—a Chetty's house would be represented by a street curtain—in the middle of which he would squat on a chair; the same chair would serve as a throne later on for the King to sit; the young Prince would enter the stage, accompanied by much burning of blue lights to set off his chamki suit, and there standing three feet off from his king—father, ask the Vidushaka to announce him! Of course the Vidushaka was there in every scene of the drama—in those scenes in which he had nothing to speak, he sat in a corner! He had to fill up all vacancies in the cast; in one scene the audience had to take him as the servant of the king, in another as friend of the Prince, in a third as a minister himself! and so on—and all this in the same dress practically! or perhaps he changed his turban. Of course there was the back-song or chorus behind the curtain, which repeated every line of every song sung by the actors on the stage; and every actor who knew how to sing entered the stage singing a song, whatever the occassion might be, and no matter what the wording of the song was, and nay even the language in which the song happend to be composed! (I am afraid this absurdity has not yet died out in the professional stage).

From the time the performance began, till its close at about 2 P. M. (!) I took in everything with my eyes and ears. On one way home, I revolved the whole story in my mind, purging it of several absurdities—like the one of the Princess falling in love with a leper!—and formed my own plot out of it, of "Pushpavalli" with the exception of the opening scene—that was added to it, on the day we gave the first public rehearsal. The next day I sat at my father's table and began to write scene after scene—some of the speeches were verbatim reproductions of what I heard the previous night—only I put the words grammatically. In those days I had a very strong memory. As my friend V.V.S. remarked those were days in which I wrote without scoring out even a sentance or word. By the next day I had

finished half of the drama, and took the scenes which I had written and showed the same to the members assembled. I think they were all unanimous in their praise and urged me to finish it as early as possible. The characters were distributed then and there—even before the drama was finished! rather a good compliment to the budding author. I needed no further stimulus and by the ensuing Sunday the whole drama was ready.

Then I had to face the next great difficulty. The prose was all right and approved by the 'critics' but what was I to do for the songs? Nobody dreamt in those days of staging a drama without songs. Could I compose songs? I knew not then the rudiments of Indian Music or musical composition. And as for the other members of the Sabha, though some of them could sing, not one could compose two lines of a song. We were in a fix; I thought of every way out of the difficulty —but the nearest one. At last I solved the problem—I wondered afterwards why that solution did not strike me at first. I asked my father. He said he could not compose songs for me—but that he would get me one who could do so—and he sent for good old Thayumanaswamy Mudaliar. Poor old Gentleman! I still see in my minds eye—the aged figure, bent almost double by advancing years, (he was then 85 almost), with his short walking stick in hand, and the old fashioned but respectable Pagai on his head. My father introduced me to him, saying that he was just the person I wanted, and that he had previous experience in the line, having helped Kasi Viswanatha Mudaliar the author of Dumbacharry Vilasum, one of the few oldfashioned street dramas which was not based on a puranic story. I told him my story of Pushpavalli and he promised to do what he can. That evening, to our rehearsal he brought two specimens of songs composed by him—and sang them to us. His vocal capacity was as bad as his composing capacity was good. It was a case of Hobson's choice with us and we accepted his terms, four annas for every song composed by him, to be paid then and there—for his drink—that was the poor old gentleman's weakness. I used to put in slips of paper the ideas to be put into songs, and he turned them into songs—and what was more useful, old and feeble that he was, taught the actors to sing them. This difficulty thus got over, the rehearsals were taken in hand, with great enthusiasm and in a few days we were word perfect. We had three days rehearsal in a week, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. On Tuesdays and Thursdays we used to begin at about 5-30 and close by 8-30, but on Sundays we began by about 2 P. M. and went on till 8 P. M.! My present actors who grumble if they are asked to rehearse for 3 hours at a stretch, will please make a note of this. Of course we were all in the hey day of our youth and a seven hours rehearsal was nothing to us. Silently we made preparations for our first public rehearsal. A day was fixed for same and the place chosen for it was the house of Mr. T. Jayaram. I think I would do well to give you a detailed description of that first public exhibition of our histrionic abilities in my next contribution.

LANGUAGE AND MUSIC.

Once upon a time, and not so very long ago, a Frenchman who had made a long and earnest study of English literature was asked to give his candid impression of English literary art. "Your prose," he answered with courageous candour, "is admirable. Your dramatic poetry—well, you have Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Marlowe, and how many others. But you have no lyrical poetry!" The interesting, the significant part of that criticism lies in its failure to appreciate English lyric verse. And why? Because many English students of French literature have arrived at a like conclusion as to their studies. No one with any critical faculty can fail to see that French prose has a sonorous and expressive quality which we may attribute, if we will, to its Latin ancestry. French dramatic verse, well—they have corneile, Racine, and how many minor glories. Moreover, they can still write Alexandrines for the stage, and M. Rostand is probably (If contemporaries may judge) better than Mr. STEPHEN PHILLIPS. But most Englighmen will unhesitatingly declare, in spite of the great line of French lyrical poets from VILLION down to VERLAINES, to say nothing of writers still living, that in lyric poetry French literature is lacking. All of which is perhaps just worth stating, if it is obvious enough, for the benefit of Engligh students of the Indian vernaculars, and of Indians who strive to appreciate the beauties of Western literature. Here, too, may be some clue to the traditional supremacy of classical literatures and the unapproachable excellence of the dead languages. "Dead languages" are so called merely because they are necessarily pronounced after the manner of the speech native to the learner. They were written down to record a vanished music, and if they retain an unquestioned and universally recognised beauty, is it not partly because we can, as it were sing them to our own modern tunes?

That suggestion, however, is by the way, and does not affect the main argument, which is simply that the difficult part of any foreign language it its lyrical poetry. This assertion can be put to a ready test. In almost every important Indian Vernacular there exist Readers and Books of Selections in prose and verse. The prose is not merely easier to understand its merits or demerits as a specimen of style can readily be grasped by the foreigner. It would not require much critical discernment on the part of the merest tyro to pick out from a number of prose extracts those which are the work of accomplished writers, of men who are already or are about to be promoted by their fellow-countrymen to the position of Classics. But the verse extracts are usually to the foreigner's taste what he calls "doggrel" or by some other depreciatory title. Does not that mean that he reads them for their sense alone as prose, and is deaf to their music, and the subtle intellectual atmosphere created by melody, by the allusiveness, the vague-reminiscences aroused by music? We donot uncommonly hear now a days that Indian music (leaving poetry aside for a moment) is not only unintelligible to European ears, but that the European's failure to comprehend it is due to the inferiority of his own musical art. There are also, of course, Europeans who repay the compliment and boldly assert that Indian music is simply cacophony, a barbarous and primitive art not to be seriously compared with the

marvels of European composition. Those who have little or no music in their souls must at least admit that it is rare to meet a musician, Indian or European, who is capable of comprehending and enjoying both European and Indian music. Is this defect (let us genially assume that it is a defect) connected with the well-known difficulty felt in appreciating and deriving pleasure from foreign lyrical poetry?

It must be admitted that we touch here on a subject of infinite difficulty, and one on which the doctors are hopelessly divided. Folios on folios have been written on prosody, and innumerable attempts have been made to define the true nature of metre. The final solution will probably be found in a comparative study of the metres of spoken languages. Already, metrologists have discovered that the metres of French are radically different from those of English and German, and produce their emotional and sensuous effect by different means. But besides the theorists, the poets have been at work, and, in their train, the composers of music have consciously or unconsciously remembered that the rhythim of music was originally the rhythm of song. Now the beat of German and Italian music is practically the same as the beat of German and Italian poetry when read. But either the beat of French song tunes goes back to a period when the *accent tonique*, the rhythmical stress of the French prose or poetical phrase, was other than it is now, or else French tunes were modelled on Italian music. The modern French composers, Debussy and his contemporaries, have notably altered French music. Their reform has partly been a conscious and voluntary imitation of ancient modes, now mostly gone out of use in Europe, but often still used in the East. This gives some modern French music a curiously Oriental effect. But they have also striven, consciously or unconsciously, to give their music a new beat, something corresponding to the rapid run of syllables in French verse culminating in the final *accent tonique*. Music, in short, has (once more as it probably did in its beginnings) followed the rhythm of lyrical poetry. The result is a music more easily enjoyed by natives than foreigners, and requiring some education and practice on the part of unaccustomed foreigners.

What makes a foreign language and foreign music difficult, then, is the characteristic lift or beat of it, which finds in simplest and most instinctive expression in lyrical poetry and in song. It exists in prose also, no doubt, but is there less essential. That it does exist in prose is proved, of course, by the tone in which we all speak a foreign language. Many people who are Irish are Scotch still speak English with something of a foreign intonation: and the Welsh perhaps still more. This may account for the characteristic lilt of Celtic poetry when it is not subdued by acquired English rhythm. This foreign tone, more betraying than mere pronunciation, it is which constitutes the distinctive feature of English as spoken by people of English or Indian race who have acquired the language in India. Hence a man with a quick and correct ear will speak a foreign language incorrectly indeed and with many blunders, and yet, somehow, like a native, while another, with a less sensitive feeling for the music of a language, will be pedantically correct and yet talk with an unmistakably foreign intonation. In some parts of India, where English is much used in Courts and other

public places, Englishmen have found it conduce to the rapid performance of business to talk their own tongue with the local intonation. A man who can do this only requires industry and practice to become a good linguist.

Have these observations any practical conclusion? If they are the result of correct hearing of spoken and sung sounds, then poetry rightly pronounced is the best means of acquiring the intonation of a language, because, in all languages, metre is necessarily based upon the spoken tone and rhythm of what we call prose. If the rhythm of prose is freer and more irregular than that of verse, it exists, nevertheless, and especially when a speaker is moved to eloquence by the importance or excitement of his subject. Modern teachers of French have discovered that the best reading lessons for foreigners, especially when they are beginners, are not in prose, however simple, but in the Fables of LA FONTAINE, though his irregular verse is singularly difficult, even for natives to read well. Not many Anglo-Indians read vernacular verse, and they are all to condemn vernacular poetry as "mere doggrel." Perhaps they are wrong. Perhaps a study of indigenous metres and indigenous music might be as valuable to foreigners in India as a study of Western music and rhythm might be to Indians who wish to attain to an idiomatic use of European languages. At all events, the suggestion is made for what it is worth. In these days of direct methods and Berlitz schools, literature is somewhat discredited as a means of learning languages. The new teachers are not wholly wrong, but perhaps poetry, the earliest form of literature, is the true pabulum for the beginner, just as mothers instinctively teach their children nursery rhymes and hymns, and so give them the rhythm and the intonation of mother-tongues. Note how popular LEAR'S Nonsense Rhythms are in English nurseries, and how impossible it is (with all deference to DU MAURIER'S admirable and amusing attempts) to write Limericks in French. Grasp the characteristic rhythms of popular poetry in any languages and you are near the attainment of that most elusive and difficult part of pronunciation, the intonation on which all metre is based, and without which metre loses half its music.

THE MADRAS MAIL.

THE POPULAR INTEREST OF THE STAGE.

BY G. VENCATARANGA ROW, M. A.

An attempt will be made in this article to analyse the causes which have made the Stage a popular institution in all the civilised countries of the world. Why is the Stage so popular?

Before we go to the question of *why*, we have to consider for a moment whether the proposition as stated is true. We must make sure of our fact before we enquire into the *why* of the fact. You are doubtless aware of the great controversy which for long years vexed the souls of scientists in ancient days whether a dead fish weighs heavier than a live fish. All sorts of ingenious theories were evolved and oceans of ink were wasted in explanation of this mysterious phenomenon. When the dust of controversy was raging from one end of the scientific world to the other, it flashed upon the mind of a young student to see if as a matter of fact a dead fish weighed heavier than a live fish and

on examination with the help of a pair of scales he found that there was absolutely no difference in weight between a dead fish and a live fish. He forthwith published this discovery to the scientific world and set at rest a painful and prolonged conflict of opinion.

The folly of this barren controversy has taught me the duty of circumspection. I have satisfied myself that the fact I have to find an explanation for is a real fact of experience and not a mere figment of imgination. There is no doubt that drama as a fine art is the most popular instrument of national recreation and enlightenment. There is a substantial agreement among leaders of public opinion in all civilised countries that drama, when fitly represented in the theatre offers the rank and file of a nation recreation which brings with it moral, intellectual and spiritual advantage. In view of the importance of the stage as an element of national culture, public theatres have been opened in most European cities at the expense of the Municipalities and other local bodies. In his prologue to *Mala Vikagnimtira* Kalidasa says :—

దేవా నామిదమామనంతి మునయః కాంతం
క్రతుంచాక్షుషం ।
రుద్రేణేదం ఉమాకృతవ్యతికరే స్వాంగేవి
భక్తంపురా।
త్రైగుణ్యోద్భవమత్రలోకచరితం నానా
రసందృశ్యతే ।
నాట్యంభిన్నరుచేఃజనస్య బహుదాప్యేకం
సమారాధనం ॥

The Devas look upon drama as a *Yagna* which gives than infinite delight. Rudra has made it a part of himself and it is the one thing which gives pleasure to all human beings swayed as they are by an infinite diversity of passions and feelings.

The genius of Kalidasa has not only attested to the Universality of the fact but also suggested a profoundly true and philosophical explanation why the dramatic art appeals so powerfully to all human beings. Human nature is composite and it is made up of certain emotions which give it colour and individuality. These permanent components of human soul, according to Hindu Psychologists, are *sringara*, love, *hasya*, mirth, *Randra*, fierceness, *karuna*, tenderness, *Vira*, fury, heroism, *bhayânkara*, terror, *bibhatsa*, disgust ; *adbhuta*, wonder and *sânta* tranquillity. These are called Navarasas. They form the woof and warp of the human emotional nature. In most human souls they are latent. Whatver reveals the exhaustless treasures which lie latent in the human spirit and draws out the unfathomable reserve of feeling in the human heart is calculated to touch the highest joy of which the human soul is capable. This is done in the drama and hence its popularity. Other arts appeal to this or that side of human nature. But drama appeals not to a limited faculty but to the whole man. Drama is an expression of the soul, an exhibition of human character and of human life, and a delineation of human energy and suffering. As has been well described by an eminent critic it is the "safety valve of the human heart."

The purpose of drama is, in the words of Hamlet, "to hold, as it were, the mirror up to nature ; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of time, his form and pressure." This noble ethical purpose of the drama is beautifully expressed by Addison in his prologue to *Cato* :

"To wake the soul by tender strokes of art,

To raise the genius, and to mend the heart;

To make mankind in conscious virtue bold;

(Live over each scene and *be* what they *behold.*)

For this the tragic muse first trod the stage.

Thus the drama in its higher aspects is not only the interpreter of our nobler aspirations but also the steady disciplinarian of our emotions.

It is no wonder that an art which has such an elevating moral function to discharge is cherished by all as a spiritual treasure. In ages when learning was confined to the court and the cloister, and sacred literature was a sealed book to the common people it was the theatre that was the most effective instrument of popular religious instruction. The mystery and miracle play, the morality and the interlude, the rude farce of the strolling players and the pageant, these were the things which in ancient tunes exercised a purifying and solemnising power over the human heart. Even to this day in country parts such rude representations of the histrionic art in which gesticulatory mechanism and spectacular display are most prominent draw crowded audiences and keep them spell-bound for nights under the canopy of heaven. As civilisation advanced, as the thoughts of men widened with the processes of suns, the drama struck a more extensive and penetrative note and dealt with the higher problems of human life and destiny. There is thus a close correspondence between the growth of the dramatic art and the advancement of civilisation. They act and re-act upon each other. Though dramatic art has the power of raising the human spirit to the higher levels of being, and of lifting it to a higher atmosphere than it is wont to breathe, the human spirit has in its turn most potent influence on the form of dramatic art.

The stage but echoes back the public voice,

The drama's laws drama's patrons give,

For we that live to please must please to live.

Aristotle defines tragedy as "the imitation of some noble action great and complete in itself; in melodious diction; with different measures to suit the different parts; by men acting and not by narration, effecting through pity and fear the purging of such feelings." Men's minds are proved to be haunted by the feelings of pity and fear, and these are apt to degenerate into sentimentality. Tragedy offers noble objects whereon these feelings may be exercised and by that exercise the feelings receive a right tone and direction.

Here it may be pointed out incidentally that popularity due to scenic spectacle, gorgeous costume, and to the employment of the independent arts of music and painting, and appeal to the eye and ear is essentially impermanent. True histrionic capacity does not consist in the employment of the trick of voice, eye and gesture but in the possession of imaginative insight, gift of oratory, grace and dignity of movement and bearing, and a perfect command of the voice. Scenic machinery and music are only accessories and do not constitute the real histrionic art. The appeal to the eye and ear must lead to the higher faculties of thought and imagination.

OUR BOUQUET.

INDIAN MUSIC.

Sir George Clarke presiding at the Anniversary of the *Poona Sarada Gayan Samaj* said:

Some time has elapsed since I had the pleasure of presiding at the annual prize distribution of the Poona Gayan Samaj, and since then I think that I have arrived at a better understanding of Indian music. I find in it more variety than it presented at first, and I am able to recognize its complexity and precision. The main difference between the Eastern and Western musical taste is that we find most pleasure in the quality of the tone and of harmony associated with dramatic expression, while you are powerfully attracted by rhythm. I do not know whether any philosopher has attempted to explain the causes of this difference. It may be that the Eastern taste is the most ancient and that our Western taste has been changed and developed on different lines by mechanical art and invention applied to the improvement of musical instruments. I suppose that the pipe made from reed attributed by the Greeks to the god Pan and some form or drum used for marking rhythm were the earliest of instruments, and they are still to be found in many parts of the world. The tone of the reed pipe is excessively thin, but it lends itself to elaboration of the musical scale and to what we regard as florid methods. The primitive drum was the instrument of percussion only and did not admit of the tuning necessary for drums of the modern orchestra. Peoples whose only instruments were the pipe and the toneless drum would develop in course of centuries a system of music based on the limitations of these instruments and the result would be a great elaboration of rhythm and disregard of tone and harmony. To these earliest instruments the trumpet borrowed from the horn was added as soon as men were able to work in metal, but as its crude form and its notes would be harsh and strident, and as it could not lend itself to rapid execution it would not tend to modify the musical system based on rhythm; meanwhile vocal music would copy the reed and become elaborate without developing it in the direction of tone and harmony. In the West there is the carving progress and improvement of all kinds which the East is only just beginning to feel. It followed, therefore, that in Europe musical instruments underwent remarkable changes, increasing their volume of sound and gaining in tone while becoming in themselves capable of rendering full harmonies. The advance from the reed pipe to the organ, from which a single individual can draw great volumes of varied tone and can produce full chords, must necessarily have exercised a tremendous effect on music as a whole opening out great possibilities denied to the instruments of the East. At the same time the human voice would be trained to rival and to surpass the rich tones of the instruments. Thus would arise a musical system of the West with aims and methods differing wholly from those of the system of India, where instrument-making has made little progress. In my lifetime I have seen immense improvements. The cornet I played on as a boy has long been extinct and was not comparable to the instrument of to-day, and only the stringed instruments perfected by Italian masters in the 17th and 18th Centuries seem capable of no advance.

In the public taste also I have seen the

rise of orchestral music to extraordinary popularity, and this I believe is partly due to the great improvement in instruments, strings excepted, which have opened fresh possibilities of colour and expression to composers. This is only a theory and there are evident flaws in it. Unfortunately, we have no gramophone records of the voices of the Greek singers which would enable us to test it from the vocal point of view. But, at least, it is true that the West worked and strove restlessly while the East dreamed and was satisfied with a musical system transmitted from generation to generation not recorded in literary form and not demanding new means of expression. The objects of this Gayan Samaj include the adoption of "methods to reduce Indian music to writing," and the report tells us that progress is being made in this direction. Indian music cannot advance till this has been done, and that a monthly Indian musical journal should be published is a most hopeful sign. I am glad to know also that several Europeans are now studying Indian music and throwing light on a very interesting and little known subject. The report of the Government Inspector is satisfactory and the increase in the number of boys who are receiving musical instruction shows its growing popularity. Government are anxious to encourage the love of music as our annual grants show. We feel that it can be a source of pleasure to many, helping to brighten and elevate their lives and opening out to them a whole world of sentiment, national as well as tinged with local traditions. I agree cordially with what my honourable colleague, Mr. Chaubal, said to you last year. The Indian people are naturally musical and this Samaj can do much not only to popularize the best forms of Indian music by teaching boys and girls to render it, but also to raise the art to a higher social level by bringing it into the household instead of leaving it to be the monopoly of the professional class. I note that the Inspector urges the Samaj not to make their teaching too theoretical, and this seems to be good advice. Theory should always be accompanied as far as possible by practice. The student will better understand theory if he is taught to illustrate it with his voice or with the instrument. I congratulate the Samaj on the interesting exhibition reflecting great credit on the teachers which it has provided, and especially on the Coronation ode in Marathi the music which it has succeeded in recording in permanent form. I hope that the prize-winners will be encouraged to persevere in this most fascinating of arts and that they will be able to give much pleasure to their families and friends as the result of the teaching they have received. When I leave India I shall like to think that my dear daughter's name will be remembered at these annual gatherings in connection with the prize which has been founded by those who realized her affection for the Indian people and her devotion to music. My wife and I cordially wish success to the Gayan Samaj in its efforts to promote the study of music and to lay the foundation of a musical literature which will help to raise the art and to enable Indian music to advance towards higher ideals and to be capable of becoming a worthy expression of the soul of a dawning nation.

THE HABIT OF KISSING.

Sir Ray Lankester, writes as follows in *The Daily Telegraph* :—Kissing is an ex-

tremely ancient habit of mankind, coming to us from far beyond the range of history, and undoubtedly practised by the remove animal-like ancestors of the human race, Poets have exalted it, and in these hygienic days doctors have condemned it. In the United States they have even proposed to forbid it by law, on the ground that disease germs may be (and undeniably are in some cases) conveyed by it from one individual to another. But it is too deep-rooted in human nature, and has a significance and origin too closely associated with human well-being in the past, and even in the present, to permit of its being altogether "tabooed" by medical authority.

Identification and memorising by the sense of smell is the remote origin and explanation of those kisses. The kissing of one another by grown-up men as a salutation was abandoned in this country as late as the eighteenth century. Independently of the more ordinary practice of Kissing there is "the ceremonial kiss"—the kissing or hands, or of feet and toes, which still survives in Court functions—whilst the Viennese and the Spaniards, though they no longer actually carry out their threat, habitually startle a foreigner by exclaiming "I kiss your hands." The Russian Sclavs are the most profuse and indiscriminate of European peoples in their kissing. We may take it, then, that the act of kissing is primarily and in its remote origin an exploration by the sense of smell which has either lost its original significance, and become ceremonial, or has, even though still appealing to the sense of smell, ceased to be (it, indeed, it ever was so) consciously and deliberately an exercise of that sense.

This leads us to the very interesting subject of the sense of smell in man, and in other animals. There is no doubt that the sense of smell is not so acute in man as it is in many of the higher animals, and even in some of the lower forms, such as insects. It is the fact that so far as we can trace its existence and function in animals, the sense of smell is of prime importance as distinguishing odours which are associated either with objects or conditions favourable to the individual and the race, or, on the other hand, nostril and injurious to it. It never reaches such an extended development as a source of information or general relation of the individual to its surroundings as do the senses of sight, hearing, and touch. It depends for its utility on the existence of odorous bodies which are not very widely present, and are far from universal accompaniments of natural objects. Sense of Smell.

The sense of smell is of service to animals:

(1) In avoiding enemies and noxious things.

(2) In tracing and following and discriminating prey or other food.

(3) In recognising members of their own species and individuals of their own herd or troop, and in finding their own young and their own nests.

(4) In seeking individuals of the opposite sex at the breeding season.

It is probable that whilst man's general acuteness in perceiving and discriminating smells has dwindled (as has that of the apes) in camparison with what it was in his remote animal ancestry, yet he retains a large inherited capacity of unconscious smell-sense, which most of us are unable to recognise, although it is there, operating in ourselves, unknown to us and unobserved. The consciousness of smell-sensations is what we value and talk of. It does not ex-

tend to the more primal smell-excitations, except in extraordinary individuals. Thus, it seems to be not improbable that we are attracted or repealed by other human individuals by the unconscious operation upon us of attractive or repulsive odours, and the unaccountable liking or disliking which we sometimes experience in regard to other individuals, is probably due to perfumes and odours emanating from such persons, which act upon us through our olfactory organs without our being conscious of the fact. It seems that we can thus arrive at a probable explanation of the universality of the habit of kissing, and of "what is that thing we call a kiss." It is not consciously used among civilised populations as a deliberate attempt to smell the person kissed, but it, nevertheless, serves to allow the unconscious exercise of smell-preference, testing, and selection with which are mingled, more or less frequently, moments of conscious appreciation of the complex of odours appertaining as an individual quality to the person kissed.

SHAKESPEARE'S HEROINES

MR. C. L. MOORE WRITES IN THE "DIAL:"

"Just to lift one corner of the cloud-curtain of that supreme and starry world of Shakespeare which impends over modern literature, I should like to make a little study of the type of female character which he has made peculiarly his own—the brilliant, intellectual, fearless girl, who is really 'a pure anticipated cognition' of our most recent feminine ideals. Where did he get his conception?

"Of course, history is strewn over with women of force and intellect, from Hypatia to Joan of Arc; and many others emerged from mythology and poetry—the Greek and Scandinavian goddesses and heroines, the Clorinda of Tasso, the Britomart of Spenser. These are satisfactory enough in action, but it was reserved for Shakespeare to make them speak. Retaining the nobility of character belonging to the scattered historic or mythical women, he gave them the glittering rapier of the tongue, by which they could more than hold their own against their opposites or enemies, the men.

"There are many studies of this wise-virgin type in Shakespeare—Beatrice, Portia, Isabella; but his best all-around girl is Rosalind. Fearless, witty, true-hearted, and brilliant, she is his most dazzling, if not deepest female creation. For centuries she has been the favourite of the English-speaking stage. As Hamlet is said to be actor-proof, so Rosalind plays herself. Many actresses have interpreted her supremely well; but, given only the most modest equipment, it would be difficult for any young woman to fail entirely in presenting the part.

"For one thing, Rosalind dominates her play as completely as Hamlet does his. She is the central fire which light up all the other pensive and rather shadowy characters. Even in her eclipse at court, the reigning Duke's daughter is only a foil to her, and she goes into exile like a torch carried through the woods. Probably the very best kind of a young woman has a touch of boy in her. Something more of Rosalind than her attire is virile. She seeks adventures like a Paladin; and though she faints when her affections receive a shock, we feel that she would meet real danger with heroism. But of course her supreme gift is that of brilliant speech. runs through all the gamut of which wit

is capable—gaiety, mockery, irony, badinage, humour, sarcasm. Yet it is never less than womanly, ladylike. She is the brilliant forerunner of the Bachelor Girl of to-day—the bright exemplar whom most women would like to resemble."

TWO SHAKESPEARE REVIVALS.

The London correspondent of the *Times of India* writes :

The season has begun at least with dignity. Within three nights we have had two revivals of Shakespeare, which is a better record than usual. Both were interesting; for one was Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree's "Macbeth," and the other was Mr. Fred. Terry's "Romeo and Juliet," with his daughter, Miss Neilson-Terry, appearing for the first time as Juliet. Mr. Fred. Terry was first in the field, so we will take his "Romeo and Juliet" at the New Theatre first. It was good to think of Mr. Terry once more in connection with good drama. He and his wife, Miss Julia Neilson, have discovered of recent years such a mine of gold in costume comedy—"The Scarlet Pimpernel" and plays of that sort—that his reputation as a really fine actor in the better sorts of drama might have come in danger of being forgotten. A fine actor he is, and always must be, with a masculine version of that famous Terry charm, which has endeared his sisters, Ellen Terry and Marion Terry—not to mention the Kate Terry (Mrs. Lewis) whom old playgoers still rave about. But the public judges very much by the sort of play it sees an actor in. There are actors whose high reputation depends only on their association with Shakespeare; and there are really fine actors who never achieve distinguished positions, because they are only seen in the commoner sorts of play. And it was high time Mr. Terry reminded us that he is a really fine actor, not merely a clever performer of showy stuff. It was nothing less than cruel, therefore, that his health should have given way just before the production, and robbed us of seeing him not only as Mercutio—a part he could play to perfection—but in company with his interesting daughter. All the same, it was Mr. Terry's production, though he could not appear in it, and perhaps ere long he will be able to take his place in the east.

Miss Neilson-Terry as Juliet.

As to his daughter, interest of course was rife. The daughter of Fred. Terry and Julia Neilson, the niece of Kate, Ellen and Marion Terry, a Juliet still of tender years, and an actress of promise that was already beyond question, the best Viola in "Twelfth Night" that has been seen these many years, a charming Princess Priscilla in the play at the Haymarket! The first night audience, in spite of a thermometer well over 80 (and that means a lot to Londoners!) was large and enormously enthusiastic. It might have been a musical comedy by the way they clapped and cheered, and Miss Neilson-Terry had to come before the curtain two or three or four times after every scene. She is more than common tall, and (if these details may be pardoned) she is altogether of big make, promising for future years the superb presence of her most stately mother (who, by the way, appeared on the stage on the first night only, magnificently clad in a red robe, to speak the opening chorus). This is on the whole, more of her mother about her, than of the Terry side of the family, though here and there, in the gayer passages of the part of Juliet, her relationship

to Miss Ellen Terry peeped unmistakably out. Undoubtedly Miss Neilson-Terry deserved the greater part of the applause she received. Her Juliet was really young, and at the same time competent. The main difficulty with all Juliets is that when they are young enough they are not experienced actresses enough to play the part, and by the time they have sufficient experience they are too old. Miss Neilson-Terry has, of course, the advantage of first-rate coaching—her father's not to mention her mother's and a great deal of ability of her own. And so she avoided the more obvious mistakes. In the famous balcony scene, for instance, most of the Juliets I have seen have flirted with Romeo. That was the very last thing that Juliet could have done. Juliet was simply an inexperienced child, who was so deeply in love that she said so, quite simply frankly, openly. And that was the impression Miss Neilson-Terry conveyed—not that she was sitting out a dance and flirting but that she had taken the whole of her life in both hands, and held it out for good or ill to this boy whom she loved. Even her very awkwardness of carriage and movement, helped to this impression. She was so entirely natural as she leaned over the balcony and drew back and leaned over again, so much the young girl! And her earnestness was beautiful and convincing.

Emotional Power.

Must I confess that, as the play went on, her performance pleased me less? When bantering and coaxing her nurse—the obstinate old woman, who will not tell her what arrangements Romeo has made about the wedding—she was deliciously girlish and gay and naughty and sweet. It was here that one realised that she was Miss Ellen Terry's niece. But then comes stronger stuff—the scene where she learns that Romeo has killed Tybalt and been banished, and the great scene where she drinks the poison that is to make her seem as dead, and before she drinks it imagines what dreadful things may happen to her in that grim family vault where she is to be a whole night, till Romeo and Friar Laurence come to rescue her. Both these were very fine displays of emotional power which some day ought to be of incalculable value on our stage, where power is none too common. But for two reasons, I regretted them. In the first place, the girl Juliet disappeared, and we had in her place the full-blown actress. Miss Neilson-Terry, one would say, had been coached in both scenes with unremitting care; and she brought to bear on them, as I have said, great emotional power of her own. But where was the natural, convincing, girlish simplicity of the balcony scene? And where the youth of our new Juliet? Both gone—both sacrified to histrionic display. And in the second place, I cannot help thinking that in "Romeo and Juliet" such displays are in themselves out of place. It is a play that depends more than any other in Shakespeare on its wonderful swiftness and directness of movement. It goes—and was clearly meant to go—at a terrific pace, just as fast as the lines can be spoken distinctly and musically. In the first chorus, Shakespeare himself calls it a "two hours' traffic," which shows pretty clearly the time it was expected to take in representation. Big histrionic displays, besides being out of key with the character of the young girl, delay the action of the play, and so rob it of one of its chief beauties—its passionate swiftness.

Scenery and Effects.

I hope I shall not be considered a ped.

ant or a grumbler if I go on to say that the manner in which the play was mounted had something of the same effect. It was beautifully mounted. Mr. Terry had enlisted the services of Mr. Percy Macquoid, than whom no one living knows more about the costumes, furniture and so forth of old Italy, of the Verona of Romeo and Juliet. In Mr. Macquoid's hands, one can feel sure that these things will be as correct as they undoubtedly were lovely to look at. Every scene was a feast to the eye—yet every scene was so elaborate that a great deal of the play had to be cut out, and even then it lasted on the first night for nearly four hours. Now, if I had gone to the theartre to see living picturet of Verona in the days of Romeo and Juliet, I should have been entranced, and as a matter of fact I was entranced with each new scene and effect of grouping. But what I had gone to see was Shakespeare's play, "Romeo and Juliet," and all this splendour and beauty, all these dances and "business" and crowds and elaboration generally seemed to me not to help the play, but to hinder it. In the same way, nearly all the acting was son what low. Our players nowadays (afraid, I expect, of being thought to "modern" to be able to speak Shakespeare) have got into a way of mouthing their blank verse. There is a regular Shakespeare voice, and the number of people who have got the trick of it is immense. Now of course it is about as difficult a thing as it can be to speak blank verse well; but one thing is quite clear—affectation, unnaturalism in voice and intonation is the very worst trick you can try. Instead of following the lines and letting them speak or sing themselves through you, people try and force them, with disastrous results. The chief offender in "Romeo and Juliet" is the Romeo, Mr. Vernon Steel, a very clever and handsome young actor, who looked Romeo to the life. Hardly once throughout the play did Mr. Steel speak in his own voice, or phrase a line as he would have done had he followed his instinct, and its meaning. The brightest example on the other side was Mr. Louis Calvert, who relieved Mr. Fred. Terry of the part of Mercutio at very short notice, and except for some slips of memory) played it superbly. Here was force, point, natural speech; yet the beauty and rhythm of the lines were never sacrificed. The famous Queen Mab speech was exquisite, and his death scene the most affecting and exciting thing in the play. Two others were extremely good—Miss Kosina Fillippi as the nurse, and Mr. Fisher White as Friar Laurence. Miss Fillippi's part had been sadly cut—and it is one of the best in the play. With what was left she did wonders. There was no display. Everything had been brought close into touch with reality, and the dear, wicked old woman's love and pride in her foster-child, her air of the trusted and rather domineering old servant, and then, after Juliet has cut her out of her heart, because she advised the marriage with Count of Paris, the dejection and half-sullen, half-sorry air of her! All was full of meaning, and exquisitely performed. Mr. Fisher White, too, had thought about his part, and clung close to the Friar's nature and the meaning of what he said, and his too was a beautiful piece of work.

Macbeth at His Majestie's.

Three nights later, all London who is in London (and it is surprising how many well-known people are found to be in London even in September when a first night occurs at His Majesty's) collected to

see the great Shakespearean production of the Autumn—Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree's "Mocbeth." Once more, I wish I could be a little more enthusiastic about the production as a whole. Some allowance must be made for the fact that I saw the play from a box. As everyone knows, all Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree's superb stage settings are built up carefully to a certain definite object—a door, a hill, a throne—whatever may be the most important object in the scene. And unless you can see the whole stage, you miss the effect he aims at. I could not see the whole stage. I could not see the door of the room where King Duncan was murdered in his sleep by Mecbeth. I missed, therefore, both the artistic (the ocular) and the dramatic (the emotional) effect of that scene. And so with some others. But I saw enough from my splendid isolation to realise that these scenes were among the most beautiful to the eye and the most impressive that Sir Herbert has ever achieved. Very rarely indeed, was the stage in full light. Gloom, a smoky pall, a twilight full of apprehension, mystery and horror, wrapped nearly every scene in this play of darkness, mystery and horror. And the architecture, stern and rugged, of that desolate, barbaric northern clime, and the huge, long-haired, roughly clad warriors with spear and shield who moved through these appropriate settings; it was all tremendously impressive. "Macbeth" acted in dumb show before it would have gripped one in a vice.

But, once more, did all this elaboration really help the expression of Shakespeare's tragedy of "Macbeth?" Was it worth while to sacrifice so much of Shakespeare as had to be sacrificed, and turn a short play (for "Macbeth" is among the shortest) into a very long one. I felt throughout that there was not enough room left for the poet. Take an instance—that of the appearance of Banquo's ghost. There he was, plain to the eye, sitting in the chair. And when he rose he seemed (it was an extraordinary clever piece of stage-craft) to walk through the wall and along it—in view but out of reach, intangible, ghostly. But I should have been much more horrified if the ghost had not appeared at all—except in the eyes and gestures of Macbeth. I kept wondering why the other people present—the guests at that gloomy banquet—did not see him too, and thinking them rather stupid; and I was so engrossed at the same time in wondering how it was done that I could not listen to what Macbeth or anyone else was saying. Then again the witches. They were wonderful. Half-seen in dim light, or seen and lost again in sudden flashes, they were hideous beyond words—horrible nightmare things. But when the curtain went up on them all swinging about in mid air, laughing fiendishly, I thought of the wires by which I knew they were suspended. Their cauldron was a masterpiece, and the appearances that came out of it seemed positively to form themselves out of the smoke. But if they had had simply an iron cooking pot on a tripod, I should have had more thought to spare for what they were saying, and for the place they occupied in the scheme of this profound and masterly piece or poetic drama. To these strictures there must be one exception—the acting of Sir Herbert Tree himself. Except in comedy, I have never seen him so good, Macbeth, as Stopford Brooke, and other critics have reminded this generation was at heart a poet. Nothing can happen to him, but he looks at it with a poet's eye, and says

something wonderfully beautiful about it. This is what Sir Herbert played for and achieved. Macbeth the poet was prominent all through and of course Sir Herbert Tree, the poet-producer who was prominent all through. I could give a dozen instances of his peculiarly individual ingenuity in "business" and idea. One must suffice. In the lovely scene after the terrible banquet at which Banquo's ghost appeared, Lady Macbeth is comforting and soothing her husband. "You lack" says she to him, "the season of all natures, sleep;" and as she said it, she took the heavy crown off the tortured head of the King. The effect was beautiful and touching beyond words.

THE PLAYERS.

Of most of the acting I have the same complaint to make as of that in "Romeo and Juliet." Too slow, too much of the "Shakespeare voice," too little of nature and reality. Miss Violet Vanbrugh—at moments quite excellent—let her Lady Macbeth suffer too much from these faults. She was quite at her best in the sleep-walking scene. A dizzy piece of ingenuity had been rescued for her here. Her chamber door was high in the wall, and from it to the stage ran a long, steep staircase with no kind of bannister or guard. Surely she must fall over! or trip over her dress. One turned cold with apprehensions—and that was precisely what one was meant to do. Mr. Bouchier could be counted on for a brisk, manly straight-forward Macduff; Mr. J. H. Barnes was admirable as Banquo; and I noticed one remarkably natural and intelligent performance—that of a young actor, Mr. Philip Merivale, who played the part of Ross, and another very delicate and sincere performance, that of Miss Viva Birkett, who played Lady Macduff. Miss Birkett is an actress to be watched. Lastly, I must not forget the costumes, and in particular Miss Violet Vanbrugh's robe. Mr. Percy Anderson was the designer of all the clothes. In Miss Vanbrugh's state robe he has surpassed himself. The technical description of it (which I call from the "lady's column" of a contemporary), is "dull pink and gold tissue bordered with an embroidery in peacock blue and green. The train is of fuchsia pink edged with mink, and embroidered with mother-o,pearl, gold, and peacock blue green." But even that cannot convey any impression of its beauty. It was even more lovely than the robe which Miss Ellen Terry wore as Lady Macbeth, and which is immortalized in the portrait of her by Sargent now in the Tate Gallery.

THE SUGUNA VILASA SABHA

The Dasara Celebrations of the *Suguna Vilasa Sabha* were held on the usual grand scale during the last week of September and the beginning of October. The festivities of the Dasara furnish a very attractive opportunity for the members of the Sabha to come together—there would seem to be no other occasion in the year capable of producing the same amount of liveliness and mutual knowledge among the ever-growing members of this Fine Art Club. It is only fitting that this round of revelry should synchronise with what was regarded as a time of national festivities in Ancient India. Hindu Rajas sat in state, making a display of all their royal magnificence; exhibitions of physical strength and feats of martial prowess were arranged for the delectation of subjects; there was an enthusiastic encouragement extended to

the Fine Arts—Poets were rewarded; musical artists were welcomed, and everything was gaiety, sunshine, and laughter.

The splendid arrangements made year after year for the celebration of this Festival by the Suguna Vilasa Sabha must necessarily remind the modern Indian of some of the features of the magnificence of Royal Courts in Ancient India. The facilities afforded by the increased accommodation and electric lighting in the premises of the Sabha contributed to the general excellence of the arrangements, which excelled to be record of all former years.

The first member of the Sabha—Mr. T. Jayaram Naicker—has always been accorded the privilege of entertaining the members on the first day and this year, the festivities were again inaugurated by his hospitality. There was the representation of a force—'The Hon. Mr. Sabhapathi Mudaliar,' one of the favourite farcical characters of the Sabha—holding a reception in his house. There was some music and good *Kolattam* in which some members distinguished themselves.

The programme of the Second Day—the Islam Day—was specially entertaining as there was a lively farce. An England returned Brahmin Barrister marries a Brahmin widow under the Civil Marriage Act. The audience were kept in roars of laughter by the officious, shrewd, calculating and humorous matrimonial agent, while the hero looked the picture of the disappointed England-returned youth.

The third and fourth days were devoted to *Scenes from Cymbeline* in Malayalam and *Varasulkam* in Telugu. A striking change was furnished on the fifth day, when there was the representation of aboriginal life. It was a skit on the Court of Heavenly Indra. There was an Indra among the foresters with all the paraphernalia of a Royal Court. There were dusky Urvasies, in all their dirt and ugliness and the mack-heroic spirit was kept up with infinite gusto. The brunt of the evening's work, in the representation of forest dances, fell on Messrs. Vadivelu and Balasundaram, who acquitted themselves with remarkable ability.

A day of special interst was the next. the *Mylapore Day* when there a was refreshing innovation in the programme—there was for the first time in the History of the *Suguna Vilasa Sabha*, a social drama in English, representing contemporary Hindu society. Ramanathan, the hero of Mr. V. V. Srinivasan's *Blessed in a Wife*, is a dissolute gentleman who has persistently neglected and illtreated his wife Lalitha, as he is in the charms of certain Chandra. There is a reformation of the hero's character by the tenderness and affection displayed by Lalitha, in the disguise of a nurse, during his illness. The English play which was in the nature of an experiment, owing to the new medium, however met with wide appreciation.

The farcical interludes of *Golden Fetters* relating to Pisthakottai Swamigal, the bogus Sanyasi engaged in crime, were represented on the *Children's Day*. After an evening of entertainment to a large number of children with the distribution of sweets—there was the humorous element supplied by the history of that delightful rogue—the *Pisthakottai Swami*.

Mrs. and Mr. C. P. Ramaswami Iyer were the hosts of the next evening—the *Ladies Day*, when there was a remarkable gathering of nearly thousand ladies, to enjoy the hospitality. The number of ladies was so large that the members had to

retire from the hall, to enable the ladies to enjoy the presentation of a *Princesses Swayamwara* in Tamil.

The last day of the Dusserah season serves as the anniversary day of the Sabha, for the toasts of evening give an opportunity for a review of the year's work. The Hon'ble Mr. L. A. Govindaraghava Iyer presided and felicitious speeches were made, thanking the office bearers, the actors and the hosts of the Dusserah.

We heartily congratulate Mr. P. Arumugam to whose unostentatious work, the success of the Dusserah is mostly due.

We print the programme of the Dusserah below.

PROGRAME (D. V.)

Sunday 24th September 6 p.m. The First Member s Day. Messrs. T. Jayaram Naiker and A. Narayanasawmi Naicker. "An Oriental Ceremonial in" Tamil.

Monday 25th September 6. p. m. The Islam Day. The Musalman Members "A Prince's Dream". A scene in Hindustani and "The Court Jester" a scence in Canarese.

Tuesday 26th September 6 p.m. The Malabar Day. The Malayalee Members, Scenes from Cymbeline in Malayalam.

Wednesday 27th September 6 p.m., The H. G. T. L. Day. The H. G. T. L. Members. A Scene from "Varasulkam" in Telugu.

Thursday 28th September 6 p.m., The Vaisya Day, The Vaisya Members, "Vanacharendra Sabha" in Telugu.

Friday 29th September 6 p.m., The Mylapore Day, The Mylapore Members, Blessed in a Wife' by Viviut in English.

Saturday 30th September 4 p.m., The Children's Day. A lover of Andra Drama and Madras Lawyers "Life History of Pishtakottai Swamigal" in Tamil.

Sunday 1st October. 4 p.m., The Ladies Day, Mr. & Mrs. C. P. Ramasawmy Iyer "A Princess' Swayamvaram" in Tamil.

Monday 2nd October 5 p. m., The Finale Day. The Pursawakum& Egmore Members Scenes from "Harischandra" In Tamil.

INDIAN ARCHÆOLOGY.

The proposal to abolish the Inspector Generalship of Archæology by the Government of India theatens to do lasting injury to the monuments of art which have been during the last few years preserved with care. Protests have already appeared from Lord Curzon and Lord Minto. We have great pleasure in drawing the attention of our readers to the following expressions of disapproval from several responsible quarters:

Lord Lamington, G. C. I. E., writes to this morning's *Times* :—

SIR,—Having been away in the North I have read only recently Professor Sir William Schlich's letter in the *Times* of the 11th instant.

I think it is unfortunate that he should have entered his protest against the abolition of the post of the Inspector-General of Forests as a rider to that of Lord Curzon against the abolition of the post of Director-General of Archæology.

These two departments have entirely different characteristics. Of these differences there are two that are prominent. First, forestry is a source of revenue to the Provincial Governments, and the later, therefore, have an interest in its proper working. Secondly, the officials are trained experts with a knowledge of local conditions.

No one man can by any possibility be able to give reliable guidance on the multitudinous points connected with forestry administration over such a vast area as that of India and Burma. All that probably he is tempted to do is to try and insist on the adoption of some crotchet of his own in places where its employment would be useless, if not harmful. For a long time I have thought that the alternative and better plan would be for the heads of the departments in the different provinces to meet once a year, or biennially, compare notes, and see what they could usefully learn and adopt from one another. However, my object is not to attack Sir William Schlich's views, but to show I am not an upholder of centralisation as a rule. To do away, though, with the post of the Director-General of Archælogy is, as Lord Curzon has said, decentralisation run mad. Where are the provincial experts to be found? Would the Government of India give the money if it should happen (very improbably, I admit) that the Provincial Government wanted to undertake a big work of restoration or preservation? How could there be any co-ordination to determine what it was best to preserve out of the countless monuments of architecture and antiquity in India? But Lord Curzon's arguments need no reinforcement by me.

I do know, though, by my own eyesight, what he and the department he constituted have achieved in Bijapore, Ahmedabad, Delhi, and Agra, and surely it is a crime to take action that would prevent other such feasts for the eye and brain being preserved and revealed elsewhere.

Gostord, 17th October.

Mr. Havell's Views.

In reference to this subject the following letter is published in the *Times*:—

Sir,—I shall be glad if you will allow me to add a few words, from the standpoint of an artist who has made a special study of Indian art, to the arguments for maintaining the *status quo* of the Archæological Department of India, so admirably set out in Lord Curzon's letter printed in your issue of the 7th instant.

Not the least valuable work which that department has done since it was reorganised by Lord Curzon's Government in 1901 has been the aid and encouragement it has given to the living art of India by the employment of members of the most highly skilled hereditary craftsmen in the restoration of the great monuments which their ancestors built. In Europe artists have good reason to regard with mistrust most schemes of archæological restoration; but, just because India has a living traditional art, such schemes can in most cases be easily and safely carried out in India, provided that the Indian craftsmen employed are judiciously directed. I can justify from personal observation to the excellence of the restoration work done by the Archæological Department of India since 1901. The money spent on archæological restoration has been better spent than most of that which provides for the official system of art education in India. It has given Indian craftsmen not only opportunities of artistic work which are denied them by the Public Works Department, but also the best of artistic training.

The Archæological Department as now constituted provides the best technical craft school in India. If the proposals now put forward are based only on economical grounds, India would gain more

economically and educationally, by reducing the establishment of the Public Works and Educational Departments as now maintained for propagating European architectural ideas and methods of art teaching which for the last fifty years have been sapping the foundations of Indian art and architecture.—I am, yours faithfully.

E. B. HAVELL, late Principal,
Government School of Art, Calcutta.
Copenhagen, October 13.

LETTER FROM SIR H. MAXWELL.

The following letter, on the same subject, is also published in the *Times* :—

SIR,—Although I am ill-qualified to criticise the domestic policy of the Government of India, or to judge of the full effect of contemplated reforms in its administration, I cannot help being struck, as an ordinary citizen, by the remarkable coincidence that, at the very time when the Home Government is directing its efforts to the protection of ancient monuments and the revival of British forestry, the Indian Government proposes to abolish the offices of Director-General of Archæology and Inspector-General of Forests.

In Great Britain we have three separate Royal Commissions at work, at considerable expense, examining and making inventory of the ancient buildings, etc., in England, Scotland, and Wales. A beginning has been made (on an infinite small scale, indeed, but still a beginning) in the creation of State forests in the United Kingdom. It puzzles one to understand the motive of the Government of India in scrapping administrative machinery which we have been accustomed in this country to regard as a model and envy as an institution.

Even if archæology be regarded as an intellectual luxury, not essential to the well-being of a State and people, and yielding no revenue, the same cannot be said of forestry. Sir William Schlich's letter in your issue of the 11th contains a timely warning. India is the one and only part of the King's Dominion where a system of scientific forestry is established. The unproductive stage, through which all forests must pass, has been got over; forty-seven years of good management and inspection have resulted in an increase of 1,700 per cent. in the net revenue, and now it is seriously proposed to discard the services of a trained official, in order to entrust the administration of this increasingly valuable property to the care of an Under Secretary. What French or German forestry owner would do the like?

Mistakes in the agriculture may be rectified in a few seasons; but the rotation of timber crops must be reckoned in long series of years, and errors in management bear fruit long after the life time of a single official.

I am,
Sir, your obedient Servant,
HERBERT MAXWELL.
Monredth Oct. 13

Mr. R. P. Karkaria of Bombay, writes, to the *Times:*—

The proposal of the Government of India to abolish the post of Director-General of Archæology and thus practically to begin the disorganisation of the Indian Archæological Department, has caused general dismay among those Indians (and there are thousands of them) who have a strong feeling for the past greatness of their country enshrined in the beautiful and grand buildings over which it is the duty of that Department to watch with fostering care. Lord Curzon has been the first to protest,

and it is sincerely to be hoped that his weighty protest, backed as it is by another from his immediate successor in the Viceroyalty of India, and vigorously-endorsed, as Reuter inform us, by the *Times* ever watchful of the true interests of India, will have the desired effect upon the present Secretary of State for India and his Council in annulling this pernicious and retrogressive proposal. The Director-General is essential to the existence of the Archæological Department, for if their is anywhere a need of a master mind to guide and direct the whole, it is surely here. The Archæological Survey had formerly a Director in the person of the late Sir Alexander Cunningham, and the efficient work that it was able to do in those days was undoubtedly due to his directing agency and vigilant care. The risky step which the Indian Government now proposes to take was already taken by its predecessor of 1885, when on General Cunningham's retirement, the Directorship was abolished. The disastrous effects of this were soon perceived, and the slipshod state into which the Department fell was visible in the squalid appearance of the buildings and monuments under its care.

It was one of Lord Cuzon's first tasks in India to rescue the glorious remains of the past from wanton carelessness by reorganising the Archæological Survey and putting the entire Department under a very capable and efficient Director General, who has done much good in guiding and bringing in a line the sporadic work of provincial Superintendents of Circles who were left without a head for seventeen years. I have just returned to Bombay from a tour in Northern India, in the course of which I visited many of the archæological remains which are the glory of Delhi and Agra and their vicinity, and have seen with my own eyes the great improvements in their appearance due to the increased efficiency of the Archæological Department. I was rather surprised to hear everywhere on my tour Lord Curzon's name mentioned in this connection with honour and praise. A renovation here, a restoration there, was always pointed out to me by the guardians of the grand old mosques and palaces and tombs as being done by the express orders of the great Lord Sahib, who has left very pleasant memories indeed in connection with these remains at least if nowhere else. Those who remember the squalid, tumble-down, decaying appearance of these buildings in former years will best appreciate the great and useful work which he has done, but which now is in danger of being undone, slowly, but surely. Well may we protest, for, like Akbar, in the fine words of Tennyson, he watches "those that followed loosen stone from stone All my fair work."

The Indian Government takes this objectionable step in the name of decentralisation; but if decentralisation is to lead to such steps involving inefficiency while saving only a paltry sum to the Treasury, there cannot be a doubt that that good will soon come in ill-odour. The great solicitude which the Government of India, under Lord Curzon, showed for the monuments of early India has done much to incline the minds of the people towards them, and everything should be done to foster this good feeling first inspired by that great Viceroy. As he has himself said in his farewell speech at Agra, "there is nothing to which the inhabitants of this country are more attached than their antiquities, there is nothing by which they are more distressed than their desecration and decay.

And few things, I am convinced have done more to bring the two people together than the consciousness that the English are devoting themselves with sincerity and ardour to the restoration of the monuments of a race and a religion which are not their own but for which they feel the most profound respect and veneration." I never fully understood the import of those words nor realised the reverence in which the Mohomedans of Northern India hold the noble Earl for his fostering and enthusiastic solicitude for the monuments of their former glory till the last few weeks when I saw personally during my tour the proofs of the high regard felt both for the archæological remains and for the man who did so much to preserve them.

THEATRES—OLD AND NEW.

We take this humorous sketch of old class theatres from the *Madras Mail :*

Our theatre is an amphi-theatre. Why *amphi*, I do not know, nor have I ever met anyone yet who did know. As far as I remember my Greek, of which I learned but a very indifferent smattering at school, an amphi-theatre is, or should be, a double theatre, presumably a circle or an oval. But that is precisely what our theatre is not. It is a large square room, with a stage at one end, a bar immediately opposite, and over this a curious erection called by the simple-minded a "gallery," and, by those who aspire to style, a "dress circle." Nor is it a double theatre in any other sense of the word. The performances are not, as a rule, superlatively good, nor does the edifice so far as I know, possess a double anywhere else in the kingdom, for I cannot find it in my heart to believe that any two buildings could have been put up, at once so hideous and so ill-adapted to the purposes for which they were intended. The outside, indeed, used to inspire me, as a child, with a kind of awesome respect, owing to the presence, on the pavement outside, of some gigantic black figures, which bore a loft flaming gas lamps. I had a vague idea that these figures foreshadowed the type of entertainment to be had inside which was, so I fondly imagined, always of the Christy Minstrel variety.

There were five classes of seats in our theatre. The stalls, which were 3*s*., the pitstalls 2*s*., the pit 1*s*., the front gallery 18 *d*. and the back gallery 6 *d*. It was not considered "correct" to patronise the stalls of which there were only two rows. People who did so, unless it were from ignorance, were considered ostentatious and purse proud and were supposed "to put on side." The pitstalls, whilst not being absolutely "bad form," were not much frequented by the *elite*. They were usually left to the wealthier tradesmen and their wives and families, who patronised them nobly. Nor was the gallery thought much of. The seats were narrow and uncomfortable and one was popularly supposed to be unable to see properly from them. But the pit was the place of the house *par excellence*. Everyone went to the pit, that is to say everyone who was anyone at all. Even Miss Jesmond who, as everyone knew, had the right to put "Honourable" before her name if she chose to exercise it, always went to the pit, where also might be seen at different times, all three doctors, both Solicitors, our three retired Colonels and our one Admiral and their wives and both Curates and once I heard that even the Vicar was seen there.